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BATMAN

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NO MAN'S LAND



MARK OF CAIN: 1

KELLEY PUCKETT • DAMON SCOTT • JOHN FLOYD

DIRECT SALES

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...and after the Earth shattered and the buildings crumbled, the nation abandoned Gotham City. Then only the valiant, the venal and the insane remained in the place they called **NO MAN'S LAND**

MARK OF CAIN

PART ONE

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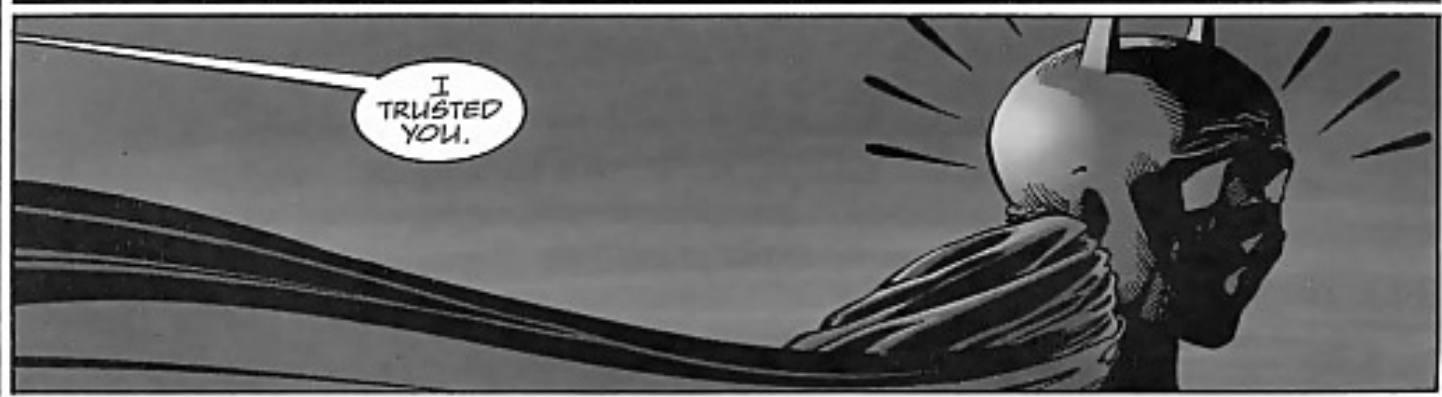
BATMAN
CREATED BY
BOB KANE

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RELAX. SHE'S THE
BEST COURIER YOU
HAVE. SHE'LL MAKE
IT.

STUPID TO USE HER
AT ALL. DIDN'T KNOW I
WAS SENDING HER INTO
A WAR ZONE.



SHOULD'VE
BEEN HERE
BY--



WHERE'VE
YOU BEEN? ARE
YOU ALL RIGHT?



HOW DID
YOU...

WHERE...?

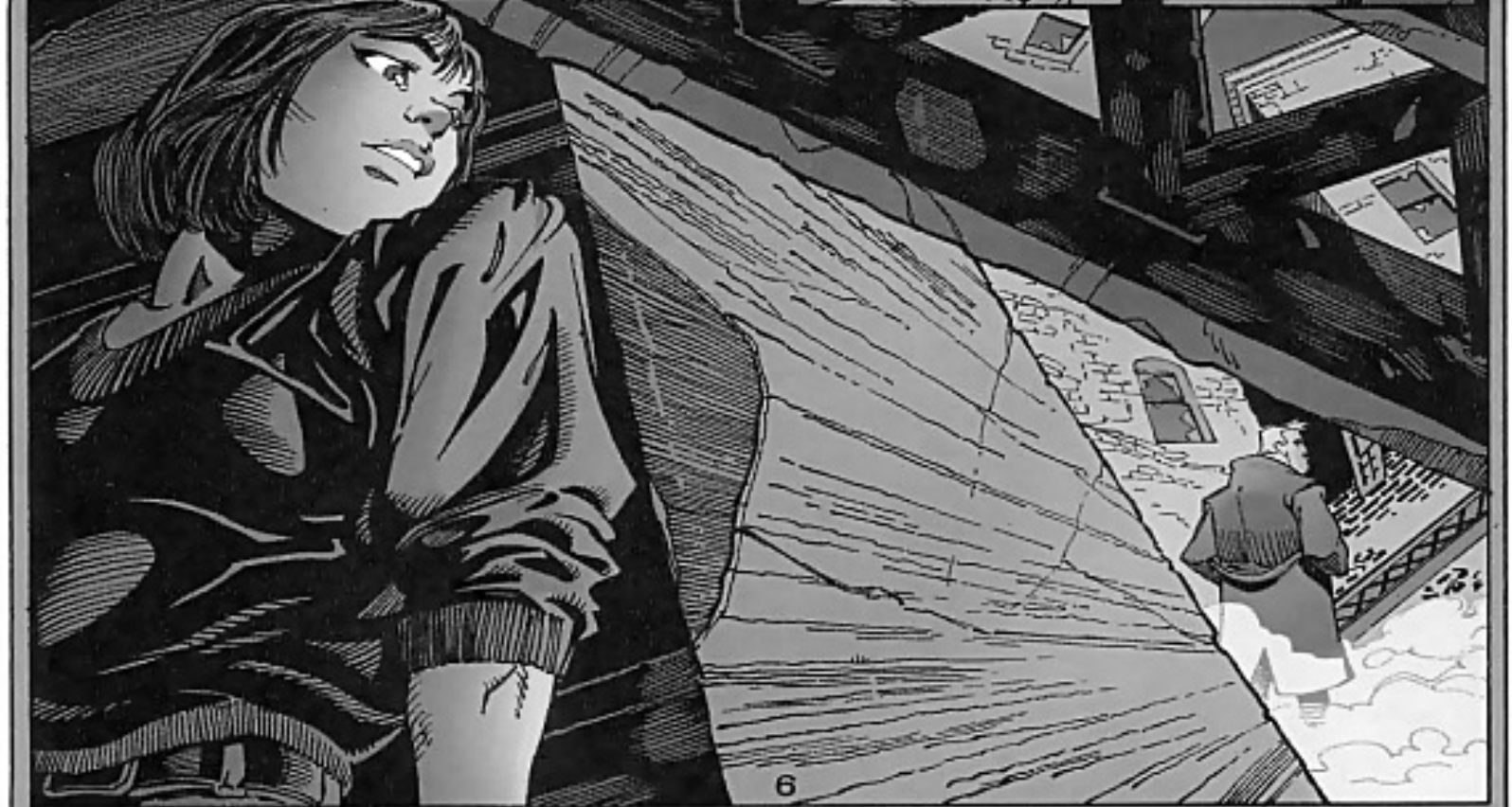
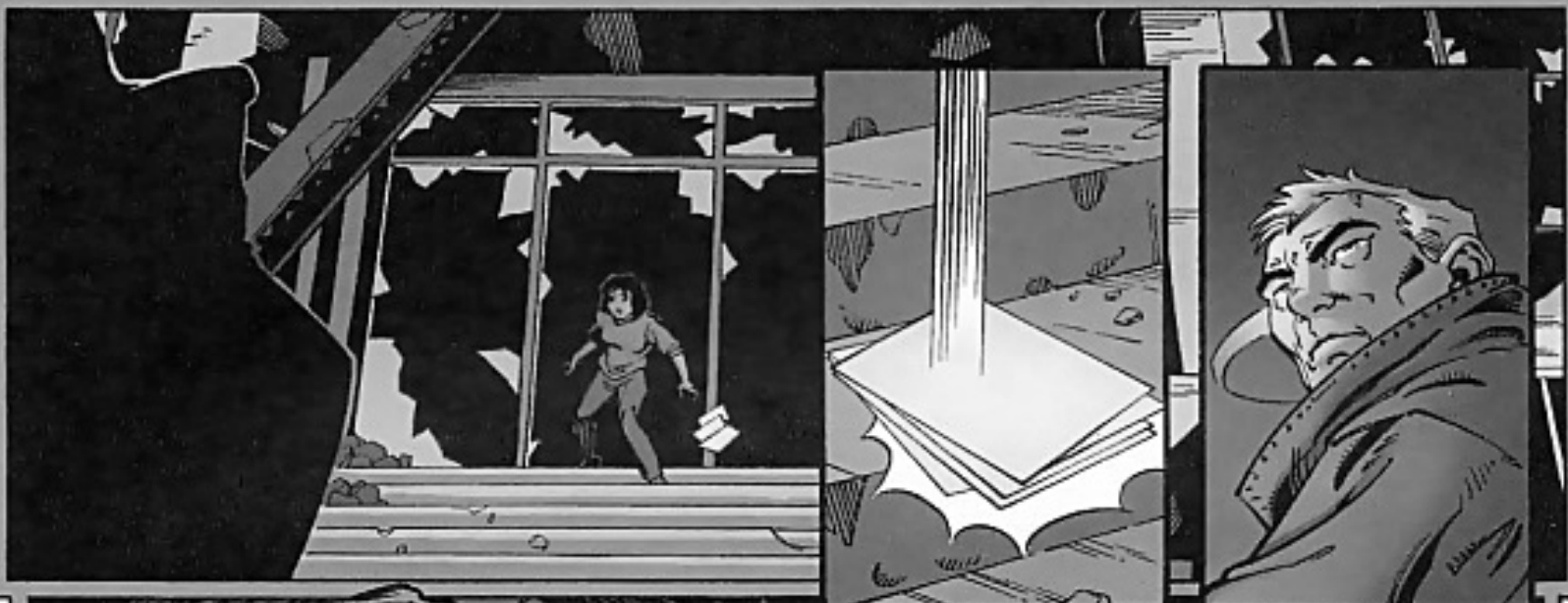


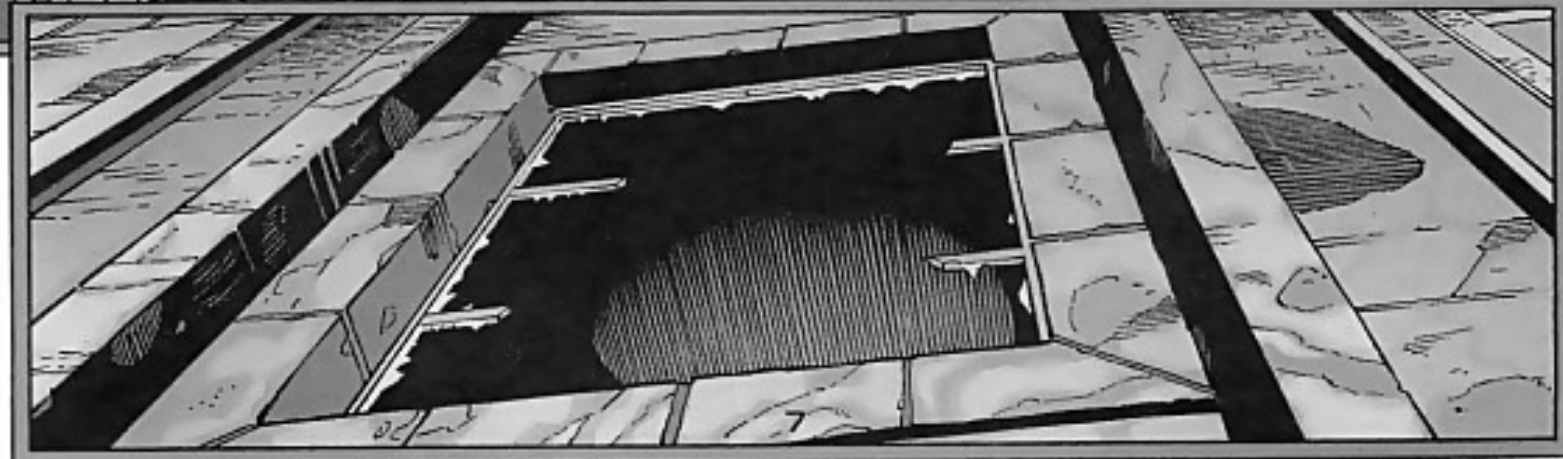
APPLE FOR
TEACHER,
HUH?

SIT
DOWN.



















I'M RUNNING
OUT OF OPTIONS,
HARVEY.



THOSE PEOPLE YOU...
SLAUGHTERED. I VOWED
TO AVENGE THEM, HARVEY.
ON THEIR GRAVES.

HOW AM
I GOING TO
DO THAT?



THERE'S NO
JUDGE TO SENTENCE
YOU. NO JURY TO
CONVICT.



SO
WHAT'S
LEFT?



YOU KNOW,
I THINK I GET
IT NOW.

IT MUST
BE NICE, NOT
TO HAVE TO
CHOOSE.

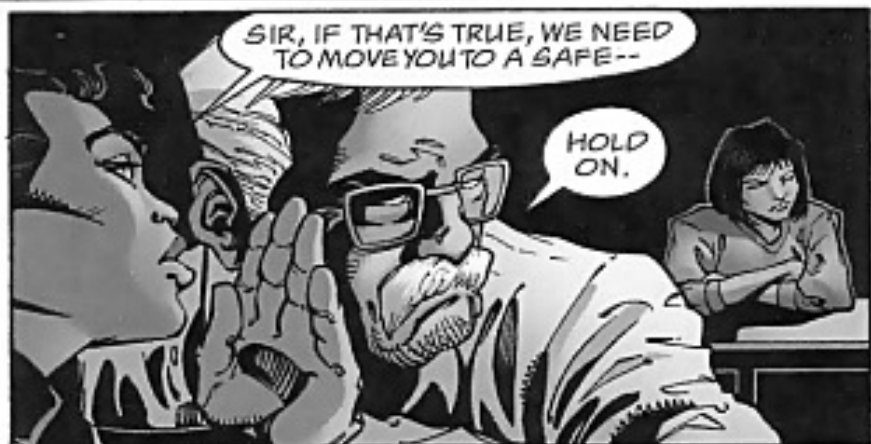


JUST THIS
ONCE.

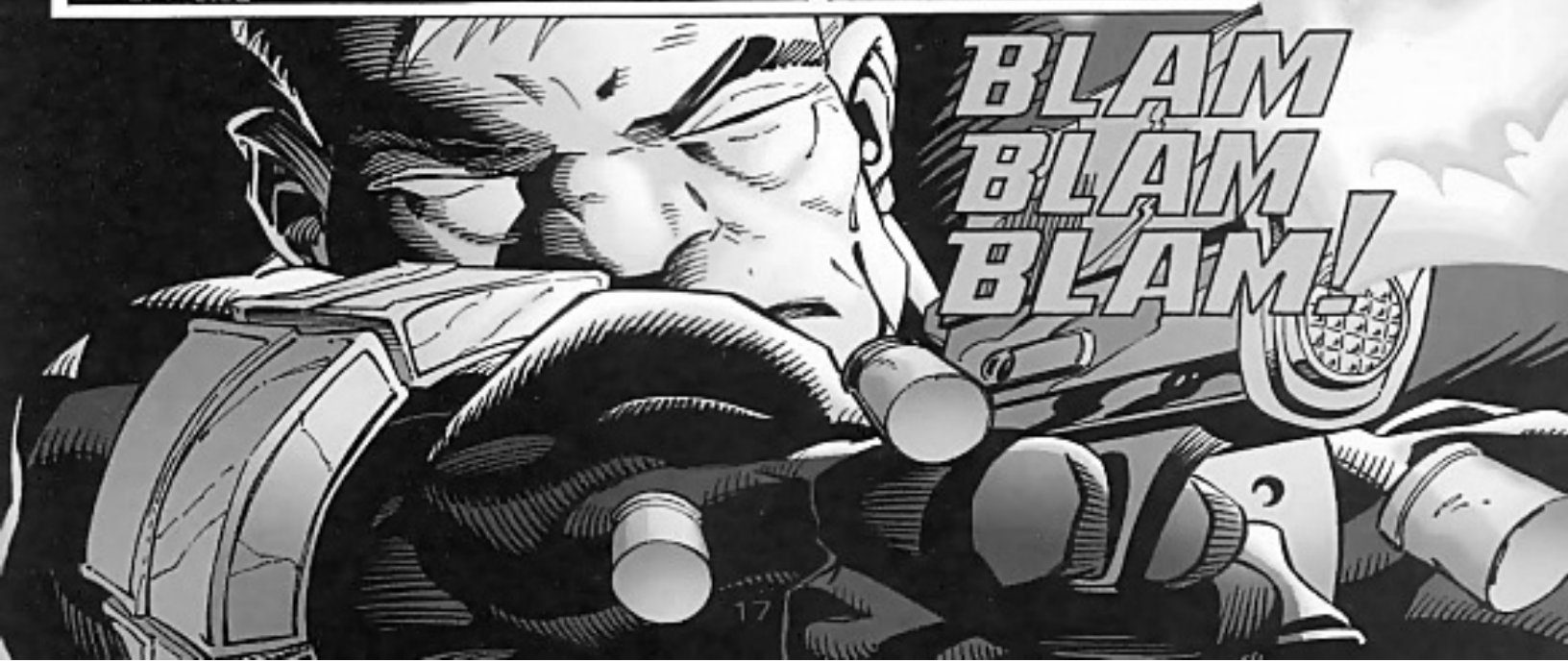


DON'T FORCE
MY HAND, HARVEY.
WE'LL BOTH LOSE.



















STOP.

TO BE
CONTINUED...

...IN
DETECTIVE
COMICS
#734



BATMAN #563

Hello, again, everyone! We hope most of you are enjoying "No Man's Land" thus far. Write in with your comments, praise, and criticisms, because we want to know what you think of the work we're doing. Write to us c/o DC Comics, 1700 Broadway, New York, NY 10019 or send us e-mail at DCODCUMAIL@aol.com.

Dear Bat-Signals:

I admit it! I was one of the many who scoffed and laughed at the very idea of "No Man's Land." I couldn't fathom it. I couldn't wrap my brain around it. I declared it stupid and asinine. Out of curiosity, however, I've been peeking at it here and there, and gosh darn it, would you believe I really enjoyed BATMAN #563? A lot! I can sum up why in two words...

Barbara Gordon.

Let me put it to you plain and simple: She kicks butt. She is just the coolest character happening in comics right now, and considering what a Nightwing freak I am, that's a big statement. I always worry that her disability is more likely to put her in harm's way than anyone else, but I don't know why. You Batfellas are great at allowing her to fight the good fight and come out on top when it would be so easy to turn her into the poor little handicapped girl that everyone needs to protect.

I love the fact that Dick and Tim are out of Gotham while Barbara is in the thick of danger, keeping a tally on everything going on around her. I've really enjoyed Barbara as the chronicler of "No Man's Land." Is this something that will only be used in Bob Gale's arc, or will it run through the entire storyline? I hope it continues.

I've decided while reading this arc that part of what appeals to me about Barbara as a character is the fact that there's usually only so much she can do before the time comes that she has to just sit back and watch. She certainly hasn't let her accident stop her, and I don't mean to imply that... but there are limits to what she can do. Like the reader, she has to watch events unfold without

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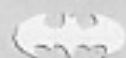
actively taking part, and so her thoughts often mirror ours. Her fears are our fears, her concerns our concerns, and her love for the characters around her is just the same as our love for them. I was very young when my dad died, so I have an especially romanticized idea of the love between father and daughter, and page 17 put a big ol' lump in my throat.

I think I'll stick around for a while and see where you guys are taking this...

HEATHER HENDERSON
BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA

You can rest assured that Oracle will be a major player throughout the entire "No Man's Land" saga, as chronicler and sometimes a much more active participant.

Also, since you're a Nightwing fan who really digs Oracle, be sure to check out *BIRDS OF PREY* #8 by Chuck Dixon, Greg Land, and Drew Geraci coming out in two short weeks. It features a long awaited team-up of Nightwing and Oracle. I won't spill the beans here, but I can guarantee that sparks will fly.



Denny,

Someone has got to put a stop to this Petit character. Yeah, I know the rules in Gotham have changed, and the GCPD has to adapt to them, but correct me if I'm wrong here: the police are trying to recreate some semblance of society. What do they plan on doing if they should somehow manage to retake the entire city? There's no place to exile the losers to then.

Besides, if Gordon (and Batman also) really want to make Gotham a better place, they have to lead the way. It goes back to a simple ideal which is why I've always preferred Superman to Batman (sorry, guys). If you really want to change the world and make it a truly better place, you have to step up and be the best person you possibly can be and do that as publicly as you can. You can't force or bully or scare people into becoming better people, but you can inspire them, lead them, and show them the way.

In the long run Gordon isn't getting anything done. He's just getting people mad at him, corrupting his ethics in a situation where bad can go to worse all too easily and making it much too easy for someone to compromise or undercut him. But maybe that's the point of the story.

Maybe humanity can't rise above the pain and the humiliation. Maybe Jim Gordon is going to become more like Petit, who is in turn becoming even more malicious than the Joker. It doesn't bode well for the future of Jim's hometown.

Nevertheless, Bob, Alex and Wayne did a good job capturing Jim's struggle with what is right and what is possible. They also handled Batman's return to the streets quite well (although I do think he wouldn't have let that punk fall off the bridge—knowing that there were mines down there and all). Next time.

MICHAEL C LORAH
STATE COLLEGE, PENNSYLVANIA

Thanks for the comments, Michael! Petit's extreme actions are just a foreshadowing of some intense drama that lies ahead.



Dear Dark Knights,

"No Man's Land" has brought me into the Bat Universe. Never before have I read such great stories about Batman. I am definitely going to keep reading this storyline, and if it stays as good as it has been, I'll be continuing next year when NML is over.

I was actually looking forward to the Demonz beating the stuffing out of Gordon. I mean, I know he wants to get his turf back, but it is a chicken's tactics. Provoking two gangs into a fight is wrong. That is accessory to murder. Even if there is no law anymore, I don't see how a police commissioner could actually bring himself to do that.

I'm really enjoying seeing Oracle (who appears in almost as many comics each month as Superman does) giving a "normal" outlook on all this.

Great to see Batman back in town. I like the way Batman agrees with using the "tagging," because honestly, it's a good idea. If people think Batman is watching over the area, they're less likely to try to commit a crime. And it was nice to see Batman neither approves nor disapproves of Batgirl.

DAVE
DLEEHI@WEBTV.NET

Keep your eyes peeled, Dave, because things are about to hit a fever pitch.

—Zung Ly

"Your friend is one who knows all about you and still likes you."

—Elbert Hubbard

NEXT ISSUE:



It's part 2 of the 3-part "Fruit of the Earth" story. Batman and Robin learn that Poison Ivy has taken control of Robinson Park. Unfortunately, things get worse when someone else takes control of Poison Ivy! Writer Greg Rucka and artists Dan Jurgens and Bill Sienkiewicz weave the tale that proves the grass isn't always greener on the other side. **BATMAN #568** comes your way in 30 days!

dccomics.com

KEYWORD: DC COMICS ON AOL

This issue's eye-catching cover was pencilled by Damion Scott, inked by Robert Campanella, and colored by Patrick Martin.

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